



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 07242008**

*Approved September 9, 2008*

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**THURSDAY, JULY 24, 2008**  
**7:30 PM**

**Present:** School Committee Members:

*Chair, Denise Burns, Vice Chair, Joe Curran, Joe Curro, Leba Heigham, Secretary Ronald Spangler, Sue Sheffler, and Jeff Thielman.*

*Superintendent, Nate Levenson, Assistant Superintendent: Kathleen Bodie, Director of Special Education, Mark Ryder*

**Absent:** Chief Financial Officer, Sue Mazzarella,

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Mary Cummings welcomed the new Special Education Director, Mark Ryder.*

**CONSENT AGENDA** – all items listed with an asterisk (\*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

*\*Approval of minutes from School Committee Meeting June 24, 2008.*

*\*Approval of Warrant # 08177 dated June 24, 2008 in the amount of \$771,965.24*

*\*Approval of Warrant # 08180 dated June 30, 2008 in the amount of \$187,977.26*

*On a motion by Mr. Spangler and seconded by Ms. Heigham it was voted to approve the consent agenda as presented with Mr. Curro amending the motion to pull the June 24, 2008 minutes out.*

*Vote 7:0*

*Mr. Curro motioned to have the June 24, 2008 minutes reflect changes to strike the word confirm from the last paragraph of the Title IX and Athletic Facilities update and Mr. Ron Spangler seconding and requesting to include his idea of the committee to get involved with the Governors Readiness Project under Brainstorming on Topics for next year.*

*Vote 7:0*

### **RECOGNITION**

*Ms. Burns recognized the students of AHS teacher David Moore on the artwork of charcoal studies in value observational still life, displayed in the School Committee room for the summer.*

### **403B PLANS Schools & Town**

*Mr. Stephen Gilligan, Treasurer briefed the School Committee board on the Town of Arlington 403 (b) plan and the new IRS compliance issues. He presented an overview of the regulations, which would include a new written plan document that requires new restrictions, new information sharing environment, new universal availability requirements and new contribution limit monitoring. Mr. Gilligan reiterated much work has to be done to be in mandatory compliance with the IRS by January 1, 2009.*

*He encourages a few committee members and other town officials to send questions and to meet over the next six months to discuss the plan and the options of offering 457 and/or 403 (b) to school employees, establish a plan, and submit the plan for IRS approval. It would be recommended not having any additional enrollments into any plans until Mr. Gilligan decides what will be the acceptable plans. Mr. Gilligan's advice after meeting with Superintendent Levenson and other towns would be to have a third party administration take the liability off the Town of Arlington.*

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

*Mr. Curran motioned to enter into executive session for Level III Grievance and Legal update. Mr. Spangler would like to amend the motion and strike the legal update from executive session with Mr. Thielman seconding the amendment. Mr. Curran does not accept the friendly amendment.*

*Roll Call: Ms. Heigham Yes, Mr. Curro No, Ms. Sheffler Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Spangler Yes, Mr. Curran No, Ms. Burns No*

*Vote 4-3 motion passes*

*On a motion by Mr. Spangler and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was voted and approved to enter into Executive Session to hear the level III Grievance at 8:15 p.m.*

*Roll Call*

*Ms. Heigham Yes, Mr. Curro Yes, Ms. Sheffler Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Spangler Yes, Mr. Curran Yes, and Ms. Burns Yes.*

*Vote 7:0 unanimous*

*Returned from Executive session at 9:40 p.m.*

## **NEW SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR**

*The superintendent and committee members welcomed Mr. Mark Ryder. Mr. Ryder presented his observations from the past few days as he has started his position and meet with administrators, SEPAC and others in the community. He noted that the special education structure is in place and will work on the major issues of the special education department; the goals he is proposing are realistic and retainable. Superintendent Levenson says the goals will be drafted and included into the District Goals in the fall.*

## **SUPERINTENDENT REPORT**

*Superintendent Levenson briefed the committee on the administration retreat held in July and reported on the rising costs of special education and how many states have reduced spending on K-12 education and the interesting ways the state of Alaska has increased pupil support. Nate reported on the pilot program with Brighton Alston Mental Health partnership and will continue to update us in the fall.*

*Superintendent Levenson proposed that the committee approve an Accounts Receivable Stipend to support Chief Financial Officer Sue Mazzarella with the collection of fees.*

*On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Spangler it was motioned to o approve the stipend of the Accounts Receivable job description Ms. Heigham would like to amend the motion to make this a 10-month School year position, and Mr. Thielman accepted the friendly amendment.*

*Vote 5 –2 motion passes, Ms. Burns and Mr. Curran voting No*

*Mr. Curro will support the motion and noted that having someone in this position would increase the accounts receivables and would like to see if the kindergarten parents could pay fees without credit cards.*

*Mr. Curran inquired about the duties of the Business Department since the recent retirement announce of one of the office employees. Mr. Curran is requesting the Superintendent to report back to the committee information on each consultant working in this department and each of their duties. He also would like to know who is currently addressing the health insurance enrollments for the schools.*

*On a recommendation of Steve Mazzolla to change the IT department, Superintendent Levenson would like to change the position of the Information Management Specialist to half time and increase contracted services by \$10,000.*

*Mr. Thielman motioned to approve the shift on the Information Management Specialist position to half time and take \$10,000. and bring it to Contracted Service Line with Ms. Heigham seconded the motion for debate*

*Vote 5-2 with Ms. Burns and Mr. Curran voting No*

*Ms. Burns will not support the motion and recommends waiting until the new Director of Technology is hired and Superintendent noted that the Town Manager has actively starting the hiring process but would like to change the position to part time before*

*someone was actually hired.*

*Ms. Heigham questioned the class sizes at the Peirce School that was reported on in superintendent report and Nate noted the Mr. Penta and he would continue to watch this over the summer.*

*Ms. Sheffler commented on the teacher turnover rate that was also reported in the superintendent report and Nate will have a full report on this in September.*

### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

#### *Budget*

*Mr. Spangler noted the next Budget Subcommittee meeting would be Tuesday, July 29, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.*

#### *Community Relations*

*Mr. Thielman reported on the July 7<sup>th</sup> meeting and the discussion included making the Policy and Procedures manual on line more user friendly. The next meeting is scheduled for August 5, 2008 at 8:30 a.m.*

#### *Curriculum, Instruction & Assess*

*Ms. Heigham reported a tentative meeting date on August 7<sup>th</sup>.*

#### *District Accountability*

*Mr. Curro will have updated draft minutes of the July 22nd meeting at a later date and the approved minutes posted. The next meeting will be Sept 4, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.*

#### *Policy & Procedures*

*Mr. Curran reported on the July 10<sup>th</sup> meeting that included discussions with Fire Chief Jefferson on emergency procedures and fire lanes at each school. Mr. Curran would like the Superintendent to get Emergency Procedures manuals to each School Committee member and to new hires. Mr. Curran noted that fire safety issues are taught to K-5 students during October and that the Fire Chief would like to see this expanded to the upper grades. The subcommittee continues to review Section E of the policy manual. The next P & P meeting is August 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.*

### **SECRETARY REPORT**

*Mr. Spangler noted no correspondence received*

### **NEW BUSINESS**

*Mr. Thielman reported that Bishop parents notified him about the vandalism at the school and noted the Police Department is aware. Mr. Curro and Mr. Thielman attended a recent organized meeting to defeat question 1 on ballot. Mr. Curran inquired on the Ottoson Middle School Schedule and its completion day. Ms. Bodie responded that paper schedules are accurate, needs to be data entered and hopes to get them out earlier than previous years.*

*Mr. Curran is requesting more detail information on arbitration costs and would like receipts copied to the back of each warrant.*

*Ms. Burns questioned Superintendent Levenson on where the money would come from if we had to give back pay and pay additional legal fees. Superintendent Levenson responded that we should keep it in perspective on the budget and if we had one additional out of district students that it could burden our budget.*

### **Adjourn**

*Ms. Sheffler motioned to adjourn at 10:55 p.m. seconded by Mr. Thielman.  
Vote 5-2 Mr. Curran and Ms. Burns voting No.*

#### **Submitted**

**Karen Fitzgerald**

**Administrative Assistant**

**Arlington School Committee**